Arizona Ready
Graduation Rate Task Force

Rebecca Gau, Director

Goal Revisions

- Goal 4: Double the number of students receiving baccalaureate degrees to 36,000 per year by significantly increasing the percent of students who transfer from a community college with an Arizona General Education Curriculum or Associate Degree.

- Goal 3: "expanding the third goal to include decreasing the number of high school graduates that require remediation"

White Paper
Re-Cap

Six Recommendation Areas

1. Early Childhood
2. "Out of School Time" youth development programs
3. Early warning data system
4. CTE / relevance
5. Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP)
6. Career pathways/business involvement

Early Childhood

- Growing body of research shows that mastery of foundational skills in early childhood is particularly important for student's long-term academic success
  - Children prepared when they enter kindergarten consistently perform at higher proficiency levels in third grade
  - Low income children hear 30 million fewer words than their higher income peers by age three, accounting for 60% of achievement by 3rd grade

Early Childhood

- Several key organizations in Arizona are focusing specifically on early childhood
  - First Thing First: access to early childhood supports; training on early learning standards
  - Build Arizona: stakeholder support for B-8 system; Collaborating with First Things First on professional development system for early educators
  - Read On Arizona: statewide early literacy
  - Arizona Department of Education: early learning standards

Early Childhood

- Committee for Economic Development framework
  - High quality early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers
  - Access to pre-kindergarten programs
  - High quality full-day kindergarten
  - High quality elementary instruction

Early Childhood

- National Governor's Association framework
  - Accountability
  - Coordinated leadership
  - Alignment of early childhood through early grade learning standards
  - Child assessments and screenings
  - Teacher/leader preparation and professional development
  - Resource allocation and reallocation

Early Childhood

- Nine key opportunities in Arizona
  - Kindergarten Developmental Index (KDI) pilot in 2014-15 can help link pre-school years with K-3 system
  - Professional Development Systems Building Work group focusing on quality teachers in early years
  - Data system aligning early childhood with K-12 in progress
  - Early Childhood learning standards already developed to align with K-3 common core
  - Interest in extended school year/learning time
  - K-3 reading funding required reading intervention plans
  - Read On Arizona's literacy supports and statewide literacy plan
  - Build AZ and FTF beginning to tackle fractured systems related to professional development, certification and early childhood investments
  - Districts are finding creative ways to fund full day kindergarten

Quality Standards for Out of School Time

- Out of School Time youth programs can combat summer learning loss and increase student engagement
- Several organizations in Arizona are collaborating to develop quality standards for programs to improve quality
  - Focused on engaging and intentional programming while promoting youth voice and choice
  - Safe and appropriate environments
  - Healthy relationships
  - Family and community engagement
  - Program leadership and management
  - Program staff, volunteers and professional development
  - Program evaluation and data

Quality Standards for Out of School Time

- Three key opportunities exist in Arizona
  - Help OST programs increase their understanding of quality to assist them in developing strategies to improve quality taking their existing resources into consideration
  - Encourage high quality entrants into the market
  - Identify / research relationships between OST and academic achievement in Arizona

Early Warning Data-System

- Just a few indicators can predict as early as the first semester of high school whether students will drop out

- An ideal system is tied into a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS)

- Teachers and school administrators must work very closely and collaboratively with the data

- Interventions must be included in the system

- Community based programs should be informed about student data and included in the intervention data

Early Warning Data System

- Three critical data elements are
  - Course performance
  - Credit accumulation
  - Attendance
- Transition year TO middle school is a good starting point for data
- Pilot currently underway in Arizona, focusing on district data but working with ADE to incorporate in the state data system

Early Warning Data System

- Five key opportunities exist in Arizona
  - Expand school and district level use of comprehensive, "leading indicator" data and collaborative processes for drop out prevention
  - Address ELL block leading to under-credited students
  - Address understanding and awareness of chronic absenteeism (10% absence rate) and its role in a data system
  - Address 8th grade math as bridge to 9th grade algebra
  - Consider pro-active measures that keep students from falling behind such as extended learning opportunities and "learning any time, any where"

CTE for Core Subject Credit

- Students report that a major reason for dropping out is that classes weren't interesting, and additional opportunities for real world learning may have encouraged them to finish high school

- Several conceptual models exist that lead to the same concept: allowing some version of academic credit for CTE courses

  - Can include increasing the academic rigor, or embedding it, in a CTE class

  - Giving partial academic credit for a CTE course"

  - Creating neither academic nor CTE, but "Math-in-CTE"

CTE for Core Subject Credit

- ADE has developed "math-in-CTE" crosswalks that link academic math standards to standards and measurement criteria associated with CTE program

- Pima County JTED began an alignment process but ran out of resources to complete

- Highly Qualified Teacher requirements are a key barrier to giving academic credit to CTE courses

- There is a great deal of misunderstanding about the role of the State Board versus the role of the local school board in determining academic credit for CTE courses, however, key Board members are very interested in the topic

CTE for Core Subject Credit

- Three key opportunities exist in Arizona
  - Address HQT issue for CTE teachers
  - Clarify role of SBE versus local school boards in awarding academic credit for CTE courses, especially those considered 4th year math, and encourage more aggressive processes to get courses approved
  - Encourage revision of administrative code (R72-302 item f) to allow one credit of fine arts AND/OR vocational education, and other revisions as needed

Education and Career Action Plans

- Plan of coursework, career aspirations and extended learning opportunities in order to develop individual academic and career goals and determine a "program of study" helps students find relevance in their coursework and reduce time to completing their goals

- Arizona students required to complete an ECAP with a six year plan and that a parent review and sign the ECAP each year

- Information housed in "AZCIS", and the student's login stays with them as they enter post-secondary stages in life

Education and Career Action Plans

- Several barriers exist to getting the full benefit of the ECAP system
  - Parents are not aware
  - School implementation is hard to track
  - Uncertainty in yearly funding weakens school motivation
  - Counselors already overburdened
  - Lack of resources to build out awareness, tracking, and training on use and benefits of ECAP

Education and Career Action Plans

- Four key opportunities exist in Arizona
  - Fund CIS system and ECAP supports
  - Build parent / school awareness
  - Engage the business community and volunteers to help counsel and mentor students while developing their ECAP
  - Encourage the development of ECAPs in earlier grades

Business relationships that lead to relevance

- Concepts around career pathways and programs of study are often associated with dropout prevention, but are also becoming a larger part of an employer-driven conversation about the need for skilled employees, regardless of whether the student once dropped out or not

- Several states have developed strong business led relationships in education - South Carolina is probably the most successful

- Both the National Manufacturers Institute industry certificate initiative and "Go Build" organization have been engaging the business community in the skilled trade/workforce development conversation in Arizona and including both the K-12 and postsecondary systems.

Business relationships that lead to relevance

- Several key organizations in Arizona are engaged in this work:
  - Arizona Chamber of Commerce (Arizona Manufacturers Partnership)
  - Arizona Skills Standards Commission
  - Arizona Commerce Authority/Workforce Arizona Council
  - Arizona Department of Education
- Arizona's "Pathways to Prosperity" state team included members of the groups above and business leaders to reconsider how business is engaged in the education system – earlier, and with a CTE / applied learning focus
- Many of these ideas were highlighted in the Morrison Institute Report, "On the Rise."

Business relationships that lead to relevance

- Key opportunities exist in Arizona
    - Unify business-education-workforce development conversations currently occurring between "Pathways" team, AMP, Arizona Skills Standards Commission
    - Develop "action plan" based on Morrison Institute (etc) "Challenges-Champions" framework
    - Encourage business involvement in earlier grades
    - Encourage programs of study that lead to high school graduation AND industry certification – not an "either/or" for students
    - Explore changes to state WIA plan that allow for better alignment between business/workforce development/education, such as AA degrees and use of Perkins funds

Recommendations are non-linear, but fall into "foundational" and "educational" locations of action

1. Early Childhood
2. Afterschool youth development programs
3. Early warning data system
4. CTE / relevance
5. Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP)
6. Career pathways/business involvement

Graduation (College and Career Ready)	
Relevance through CTE/Business involvement	ECAP
Quality Early Childhood	Quality Out of School Time	Data Culture (KDI/EWDS)

Foundational Opportunities

- Legislative
  - Require Kindergarten Developmental Index (KDI) be added to data system
- Budgetary
  - Extended learning time, focused on struggling students
  - Adjust/enhance K-3 reading funding to focus on struggling students
  - Encourage high quality entrants into the market through incentive programs/drop out prevention grand
- Regulatory
  - Credentials for early childhood workers aligned to academic standards
- "Visionary"
  - Enhance visibility of Read On Arizona and Build AZ
  - Promote creative ways to fund voluntary full day kindergarten that is aligned to state standards
  - Help OST programs increase their understanding of quality to assist them in developing strategies to improve quality taking their existing resources into consideration
  - Identify / research relationships between OST and academic achievement in Arizona

Educational Opportunities

- Legislative
  - Expand school and district level use of comprehensive, "leading indicator" data and collaborative processes for drop out prevention in state data system
  - Address understanding and awareness of chronic absenteeism (10% absence rate) and its role in a data system
  - Address ELL block leading to under-credited students
- Budgetary
  - Consider pro-active measures that keep students from falling behind such as extended learning opportunities and "learning any time, any where"
  - Fund CIS system and ECAP supports

Educational Opportunities

- Regulatory
  - Address HQT issue for CTE teachers
  - Clarify role of SBE versus local school boards in awarding academic credit for CTE courses, especially those considered 4th year math, and encourage more aggressive processes to get courses approved
  - Encourage revision of administrative code (R72-302 item f) to allow one credit of fine arts AND/OR vocational education, and other revisions as needed
  - Encourage the development of ECAPs in earlier grades
  - Explore changes to state WIA plan that allow for better alignment between business/workforce development/education, such as AA degrees and use of Perkins funds
  - Address 8th grade math as bridge to 9th grade algebra
- "Visionary"
  - Build parent / school awareness of ECAP
  - Engage the business community and volunteers to help counsel and mentor students while developing their ECAP
  - Unify business-education-workforce development conversations currently occurring between "Pathways" team, AMP, Arizona Skills Standards Commission
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Next Steps

- Build out more specific recommendations and "actors" for legislative, budgetary, regulatory and "visionary"
- For example (and this is purely example only)
  - Governor:
    - Add to budget request
      - Drop out prevention grant funding for Out of School Time/informal education programs and/or early childhood interventions that are linked to state standards, research based, support struggling students, and have a private match
      - ECAP/CIS system funding
    - Champion legislation
      - Ensuring key elements to data system
  - State Board of education
    - Establish CTE/Academic credit policy/program
  - Arizona Ready
    - Build awareness of ECAP
  - Grad Rate Task Force
    - Build out Morrison Institute Challenges-Champions chart and BE the guiding champions for the completion of the action steps that overcome the challenges